#### Kentucky Department for Community Based Services Self Sufficiency Team Formative Program Evaluation by Rojir Engstrom, University of Louisville

#### Quantitative Study

The purposes of the quantitative portion of this study were to identify selfsufficiency barriers for high risk KTAP recipients, to determine the current manner of service delivery to address those identified barriers and to discover the quality of services provided to address identified barriers.

To obtain this information a survey was designed in two parts. Part one asked participants to indicate which of 24 listed barriers they had experienced. These 24 barriers had been found to occur for welfare recipients in other studies. Participants were also asked to write in any additional, unlisted barriers that were relevant for them. They were then asked to indicate which of three listed means of service provision they had received in relation to each of their indicated barriers. Part two consisted of ten questions in a Likert-type scale format that rated service provision over a range of characteristics.

Members of the specialized team were asked to administer the survey to clients as they closed cases and terminated services. Results of the 33 surveys that were administered yielded a frequency of occurrence for 25 barriers, profiles of services with regard to each of the barriers, and data showing client satisfaction with services.

Analysis of the data demonstrates a clear need for the specialized team to continue providing services and a very high degree of satisfaction with services as currently provided. Findings also indicate a need for more through methods of determining client's perceived barriers as, in many cases, clients indicated that barriers were neither identified nor addressed.

#### Qualitative Study

The qualitative study invited participants to talk about their experiences with regard to services provided by the specialized team, with regard to receiving public assistance, and with regard to their efforts toward satisfactory employment. Four semi-structured interviews were recorded, transcribed, segmented and coded and several prevalent themes emerged. First were the overwhelmingly positive comments regarding services provided by the specialized team. While gratifying for team members, this was not surprising. A high degree of satisfaction was expected because of the high level of experience within the team and because of the intensive nature of services. Other themes echoed those noted in other studies, namely that services of the benefits provider were variable in quality, that repeated childbirth and health problems resulted in

major recurring barriers and that the promise of receiving public assistance was for some a disincentive to achievement of self sufficiency.

Comments made by recipients support the need for the services of the specialized team. Specifically there emerged clear need for services to help recipients deal with the social services system, to support motivation toward self-sufficiency and to help recipients negotiate a wide range of personal problems.

#### Impact on Policy and Practice

While the social workers providing specialized services to this vulnerable population are to be highly commended for the praise expressed by participates, they should also take note of the significant number of participants that did not feel they were provided services to address some important barriers. Additional study should be devoted to how social workers might discover all of the barriers that are hindering clients' progress toward self-sufficiency. Improved methods of bringing out all of the barriers early on in the intervention might greatly increase the effectiveness of service provision and greatly increase recipients' chances of achieving sustainable self-sufficiency more quickly.

Recipients' swift achievement of self-sufficiency has widespread economic and personal implications. The movement from public assistance to payroll equates to reduced public expenditures required to support benefits and also in greater productivity for the local economy through an expanded labor force. The personal benefit for those who find greater personal productivity in their lives likewise are many and can hardly be overstated. Enhanced quality of life, greater self esteem, healthier environments for growing children and reduced violence only begin to describe a chain of positive effects set in motion as we unlock barriers that are currently holding many in economic and social deprivation. Policy makers should take note of this program as a means to support economic growth while simultaneously producing significant social improvement within the community.



# Unlocking Barriers to Self Sufficiency

An evaluation of work to help persons achieve freedom from dependence on public assistance

By Rojir Engstrom



## Background - History

- Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) 1996
- ◆ Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) replaces Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)
- Public fear that loss of safety net will result in widespread, extreme deprivation
- Specialized team of highly experienced social workers formed to serve clients with chronic barriers to self sufficiency - April 1999



## Background – Under TANF

- ◆ Clients are required to meet work or education requirements to qualify for benefits
- ♦ Clients sanctioned for 6 months, then discontinued if sanction not cured.
- ♦ 60 Month lifetime limit for cash assistance.
   First round of terminations due to lifetime limits October 2001



## Background – Service Provision

 Clients applying for public assistance are first serviced by the benefits provider.

\* "High risk" clients are serviced by specialized service team managed under child protective services, the focus of this study



## Background - Population

♦ KTAP Cases 5,600 (Jefferson County)

◆ Adults 4,000

♦ Children 9,900

♦ Males 200

◆ Females 3,800

Minorities 9,600



## Background - Population

- High Risk Client Profile
  - Receiving public assistance for over 36 months
  - Sanctioned for noncompliance with work or education requirements
  - Discontinued for having reached 60 month lifetime benefit limit



## Research Questions

- ♦ What are the barriers to self sufficiency that are being experienced by local, low income, high risk families that are currently receiving public assistance?
- ◆ How do clients perceive that barriers are being addressed by the agency?
- How do clients experience services provided by the agency?



## Methods

#### Quantitative

- Clients identified the barriers to selfsufficiency they had experienced
- Clients identified service delivery for each of the identified barrier
- ♦ Clients rated effectiveness of service delivery (Likert type scale questions).

#### Qualitative

◆ Face to face, semi-structured interviews seeking client's perspective.



## Survey Administration

- ◆ Self Sufficiency Team members initially to administer the survey at the close of services for *all* clients during the survey period (quasi-experimental).
- ◆ Survey administered surveys 33 of 244 cases that were closed during the survey period (a convenience sample).



# Total Number of Barriers Identified by Clients

-Mean 5.48

-Median 4

-Modes 2, 8

Frequency	#	Valid %
0	2	6.1
1	4	12.1
2	5	15.2
3	2	6.1
4	4	12.1
5	2	6.1
6	2	6.1
7	1	3.0
8	5	15.2
10	2	6.1
12	1	3.0
13	1	3.0
14	1	3.0
17	1	3.0
Total	33	100.0



## Barriers - Relative Frequencies

personal problems (#11)	21
transportation (#16)	17
education (#12)	14
health problems (#14)	14
motivation (#6)	13
job experience (#13)	11
children more important (#4)	9
quality childcare (#5)	8
self-esteem (#10)	8
employer is inflexibility (#8)	8
personal attitudes (#1)	8
discrimination (#7)	8



## Barriers - Relative Frequencies

family member health problems (#15)	7
fear of interviewing or work setting (#9)	7
influence of family or friends (#2)	5
mental illness (#22)	5
family member mental illness (#23)	2
felony convictions* (#25,26)	2
interpersonal difficulties (#3)	1
stable housing (#17)	1
substance abuse (#18)	1
spouse abuse (#19)	1
partner sabotage (#20)	1
*written in by clients	



## How Services Were Provided

#### Profile of "Personal Problems" Barrier

Number who selected this barrier

Direct services provided by specialis	t 71%
Specialist referred elsewhere for serv	vices 81%
Services provided by benefits progra	m 76%
Total satisfaction score (45 possible)	39
Profile of "Transportation" Barrier	
Number who selected this barrier	17
Direct services provided by specialis	t 65%
Specialist referred elsewhere for serv	vices 65%
Services provided by benefits progra	am 59%
Total satisfaction score (45 possible)	40



Profile

## How Services Were Provided

#### Profile of "Education" Barrier

Number who selected this barrier	14
Direct services provided by specialist	79%
Specialist referred elsewhere for services	79%
Services provided by benefits program	64%
Total satisfaction score (45 possible)	41
of "Health Problems" Barrier	
Number who selected this barrier	14
Direct services provided by specialist	64%
Specialist referred elsewhere for services	71%
Services provided by benefits program	64%
Total satisfaction score (45 possible)	41



## How Services Were Provided

	Barriers	% of Barriers
Total Barriers Reported	175	100%
Spec Direct Services Provided	116	66%
Specialist Referrals	120	69%
BP Services Provided	103	59%
In Cases with Barriers	#Cases	# Barriers
BP and Specialist Services	23	87
No Services from BP	16	84
No BP or Specialist Services	14	58
No BP but Specialist Services	8	26
BP but no Specialist Services	2	4
Specialist Services		
Direct & Referral	24	111
Referrals Only	5	9
Direct Only	4	5



### Inferential Tests

- ◆ A Pearsons r examining the relationship between number of barriers and number of services revealed a strong positive relationship that was significant (r (28) = .698, p < .001).
- A Pearsons r examining the relationship between number of barriers and total satisfaction revealed a weak negative relationship that was not significant (r (31) = -.025, p > .05).



## **Customer Satisfaction**

Category	Mean	Median	Mode
Curing Sanction	4.6	5	5
Understand KTAP/KW	4.5	5	5
Work with BP	4.3	4	5
# Home Visits Right	4.5	5	5
More Home Visits	2.9	3	3
Relationship w/Spec	4.6	5	5
Knowledge of Agency	4.4	5	5
Knowledge/Community	4.5	5	5
Overall Effectiveness	4.6	5	5
Total Score	40	42	45



## Qualitative Results

#### Referring to specialist

"It's like everything I need to answer and get done and didn't understand she already explained it to me. She was there for me just in every way that I needed her there for me she was there for me. She even went out of her way for me..."

#### Referring to receiving cash assistance

"...they came out and they had the papers to see if I wanted and extension - I 'm like, 'No, I wanna work'...That's giving me a reason to not to go out to work cause I know I can try to get the money back. Yea, as long as you know you're getting it it's like why go out and work?"



## Qualitative Results

#### Referring to benefits workers:

"Yea, then it was like she did write this up. And then more of my stuff - and she would bring it back down again, she'd just find another reason to bring it back down. It was like she was constantly on me. I hadn't had the problems before."

"I got to hearing about the programs from my worker that I could go through, like by me working or whatever like the grant that helped me get my car and so forth. She helped me to get childcare. She helped me to get my GED.. and what I mean by help is that she was talking to me, I had really never had no one to talk to me to be a friend to me to let me know besides myself I had everything that I dealt with I had to pick up on my own so she was there like to guide me in the right direction."



### Discussion

- ◆ Large number of cases/barriers without BP services indicates urgent need for specialized team services. Interview comments also indicate need.
- ◆ Significant number of barriers missed by both BP and specialist team indicates need for better instrument to recognize needs.
- ◆ Extremely high satisfaction ratings indicates value of specialist team to clients. Interview comments underscore high level of satisfaction



## Research Limitations & Future Recommendations

- ◆ Small convenience sample. Specialists may have selected participants who were the best clients. Repeat study under controlled conditions.
- Problems with the research instruments should be corrected before continued use.
- ◆ Some data entry decisions may have exaggerated number of undressed barriers (4 cases have ambiguous data)



## Importance to Social Work

To contribute to the body of knowledge

 Experiences of people in poverty dealing with social service system

 Understanding barriers to self sufficiency

 Improved agency service delivery & lessons for other SS agencies





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#### **Self Sufficiency Team Effectiveness Survey**

November 27, 2001

#### Section I – Barriers and interventions.

Directions: Below you will find a list of statements about things that may have had an effect on your ability to get hired and keep a job. Please read each item carefully and then answer questions "a" through "d" that follow each questions. Please note that if the statement is not true for you or does not apply to you, just answer no to question "a" below the statement and move on to the next numbered question.

1. My personal attitudes about work have made it hard to get hired or keep a job.
<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 2)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  No</li> <li>Yes  No</li> </ul>
2. Influence or attitudes of family or friends have made it hard to get hired or keep a job.
<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 3)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  Yes  No</li> </ul>
3. I have had a hard time getting hired or keeping a job because it is hard for me to get along with other people that I have to work with or I don't like the people I have to work with.
<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 4)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  Yes  No</li> </ul>

#### $Section \ I-Barriers \ and \ interventions \ (continued)$

4.	I find it hard to work outside of the home because I feel that it is more important that I stay home with my children.
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 5)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  Yes  No</li> </ul>
5.	I find it hard to work outside of the home because I cannot find anyone I would trust to take care of my children while I am at work.
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 6)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  No</li> </ul>
6.	I have found it hard to stay encouraged and motivated to look for work or to stay at a job.
	<ul> <li>a. a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 7)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  Yes  No</li> </ul>
7.	I feel that other people's prejudice has hindered me from being hired or keeping a job.
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?</li></ul>

#### $Section \ I-Barriers \ and \ interventions \ (continued)$

8.	I have felt that my employer is not flexible enough with work schedules or time off to allow me to work and also take care of my children.
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 9)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  No</li> </ul>
	I have had a hard time getting hired because I have been nervous about going on interviews or afraid of having to work in an unfamiliar setting.
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 10)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  No</li> </ul>
10.	I have had a hard time getting hired because I don't feel as if anyone would want to hire me.
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?</li></ul>
11.	I have had other personal problems that have hindered me from getting hired or keeping a job.
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 12)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  Yes  No</li> </ul>

#### Section I – Barriers and interventions (continued)

12. I	have found it hard to get hired and maintain a job because of lack of education.
b c	<ul> <li>This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 13)</li> <li>Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  Yes  No</li> </ul>
13. I	have found it hard to get hired and maintain a job because of lack of job experience.
b c	<ul> <li>This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 14)</li> <li>Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  No</li> <li>Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  Yes  No</li> </ul>
14. I	have found it hard to get hired and maintain a job because of my own health problems.
b c	<ul> <li>This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 15)</li> <li>Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  No</li> <li>Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  Yes  No</li> </ul>
	have found it hard to get hired and maintain a job because of health problems of another amily member.
b c	<ul> <li>This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 16)</li> <li>Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  Yes  No</li> </ul>

#### Section I – Barriers and interventions (continued)

16.	I have found it hard to get hired and maintain a job because of lack of transportation.
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 17)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  Yes  No</li> </ul>
17.	I have found it hard to get hired and maintain a job because of having to move frequently or not having stable housing.
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 18)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  No</li> </ul>
18.	I have found it hard to get hired and maintain a job because of alcohol or drug abuse.
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 19)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  Yes  No</li> </ul>
19.	I have found it hard to get hired and maintain a job because of spouse abuse or other violence in my home.
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 20)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  Yes  No</li> </ul>

#### $Section \ I-Barriers \ and \ interventions \ (continued)$

20.	I have found it hard to get hired and maintain a job because my spouse or someone else who lives with me intentionally does things that cause me to loose jobs or job opportunities					
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 21)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  No</li> </ul>					
21.	I have found it hard to get hired and maintain a job because of having no telephone.					
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 22)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  No</li> </ul>					
22.	I have found it hard to get hired and maintain a job because of my own mental illness.					
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 23)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  No</li> </ul>					
23.	I have found it hard to get hired and maintain a job because of a mental illness of a family member.					
	<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 24)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  Yes  No</li> </ul>					

#### $Section \ I-Barriers \ and \ interventions \ (continued)$

24. I have found it hard to get hired and maintain a job because of I have a record of getting fired and that keeps me from being hired.	
<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?  Yes  No (if no go to item 25)</li> <li>b. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist provide counseling or services to help you overcome this problem?  No</li> <li>c. Did your Self Sufficiency Specialist refer you to other services to help you overcome this problem?  Yes  No</li> <li>d. Did your Family Support Case Manager provide services to help address this problem?  Yes  No</li> </ul>	S
The last two items, items 25 and 26 have places for you to list your own statements about proble or barriers that may have hindered you from getting hired or keeping a job. If there are other rea please describe them in these items and answer questions "a" through "d" about the statement or statements that you provided.	sons
25. I have found it hard to get hired and maintain a job for another reason (please explain)	_
<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?</li></ul>	- S
26. I have found it hard to get hired or maintain a job for another reason (please explain)	_
<ul> <li>a. This statement is true?</li></ul>	- S

#### **Section II - Overall Services**

For this section please read the questions and select from the list of responses to the right one at a time. Decide how well each statement describes what you have experienced while working with the self sufficiency specialist. If the statement describes your experience very well, then circle the number 5 indicating that you strongly STRRONGLY AGREE; if the statement does not describe your situation at all, then circle the number 1 indicating that you STONGLY DISAGREE; if the statement describes your situation to some degree then select a number 2,3,or 4 to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement about your experience.

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
27. My Self sufficiency worker helped me to overcome a KTAP sanction.	1	2	3	4	5
28. My self sufficiency worker helped me to better understand requirements of Kentucky Works or KTAP	1	2	3	4	5
29. My self sufficiency worker helped me to work better with my Family Support Case Manager (KTAP Case Manager).	1	2	3	4	5
30. I feel that the number of home visits was about right	1	2	3	4	5
31. I feel that there should have been more home visits.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I feel that I had a strong and supportive relationship with my Self Sufficiency Worker	1	2	3	4	5
33. I feel that my Self sufficiency worker was very knowledgable about DCBS programs	1	2	3	4	5
34. I feel that my Self sufficiency worker was very knowledgable about services available in the community	1	2	3	4	5
35. I feel that my Self sufficiency worker was very knowledgable about human behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Overall, the services of my self sufficiency worker were effective and helpful in helping me make progress toward self sufficiency	1	2	3	4	5